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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 005272

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM CO

SUBJECT: AMB WOOD MEETING WITH DUTCH HUMAN RIGHTS AMB PIET DE KLERK

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SUMMARY  
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1. (U) On May 13, the Ambassador discussed drug eradication efforts, demobilization and human rights with Dutch Ambassador At Large For Human Rights Piet de Klerk. AMB de Klerk acknowledged the need for international assistance to battle drugs, but asked if USG policies were making sufficient impact. He shared international community concern about a weakened draft Law for Justice and Peace currently before the Colombian Congress. He inquired why Colombian President Uribe appeared reluctant to criticize the military in public. On human rights, de Klerk expressed support for the tough chair statement on the situation of human rights in Colombia, recently adopted by the Commissioner on Human Rights, noting that the U.S. had joined consensus on it as well. End Summary.

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BACKGROUND  
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2. (U) On May 13, the Ambassador met with Dutch Ambassador At Large For Human Rights Piet de Klerk to discuss drug eradication efforts, demobilization, and human rights concerns in Colombia. Also present at the meeting were Dutch AMB to Colombia Frans van Haren, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs South American Director Gertie Mulder, and Dutch and U.S. Embassy staff. AMB Wood briefed de Klerk on the facts on the ground in Colombia and on U.S. policy.

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WAR ON DRUGS  
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3. (U) de Klerk recognized the importance of the war on drugs and how it affects the future political stability of Colombia, as well as the need for international assistance. He expressed an interest in details about USG assistance to Colombia and its perceptions on the handling of the drug war. de Klerk also asked how the conflict with the illegal armed groups would be different if they were not involved in the drug trade. de Klerk expressed concern that the draft Law for Peace and Justice before the congress had become too watered down and was being criticized by the international community.

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EXTRADITION  
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4. (U) AMB de Klerk indicated his concern that Article 64 of the Law for Justice and Peace regarding sedition might complicate extradition proceedings for the future. AMB explained that, although it was rejected on April 12, the GOC was going to try to re-insert it. AMB and de Klerk discussed briefly the visit to Colombia of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour currently underway (septel). The Ambassador stressed the importance of the OHCHR establishing better relations with the GOC.

5. (U) de Klerk noted that the High Commissioner's comments were compatible with the tough chair statement on Colombia recently adopted by the UN Commission for Human Rights, on which the Netherlands, the U.S. and Colombia had joined consensus. AMB noted that, given all the other issues being addressed at the CHR, adequate time was not allotted to the issue of Colombia in Geneva. Most EU Ambassadors resident in Colombia disagreed with the approach taken by their counterparts in Geneva. There was no perfect solution to the human rights problems in Colombia, but incremental pressure, rather than ultimatums, remained the best solution to affect change.

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URIBE AND COLMIL  
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6. (U) de Klerk asked for the Ambassador's opinion on Uribe's relationship with the Colombian military, and why the president was reluctant to criticize COLMIL in public. AMB said that, although Uribe was working hard privately to clean up the COLMIL, it was difficult for Uribe to "trash" them publicly since they play a critical role in the four front

war against the FARC, ELN, paramilitaries and narco-traffickers and in ultimately securing the peace. That said, while the military continues to make progress, it needed to do more to strengthen military justice, break ties to paramilitary groups, and investigate and prosecute human rights crimes in which it may have been directly or indirectly involved.

WOOD